

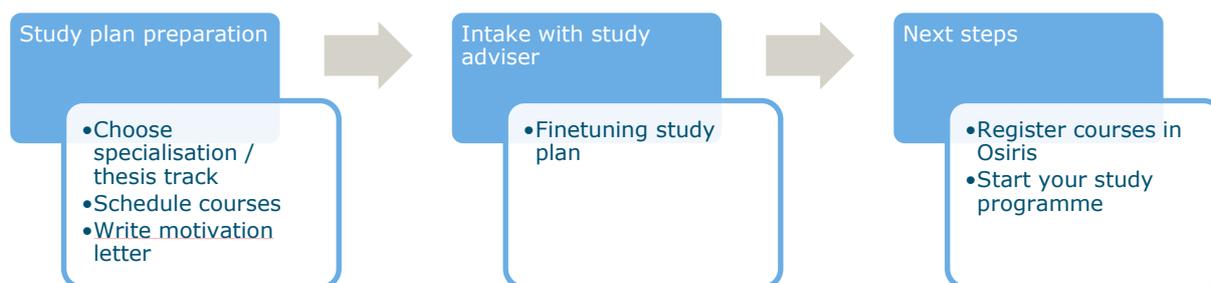
## Draft your own study plan

As you have (almost) made your mind up about which study programme you choose, it is time to draft your own study plan. Within your preferred MSc programme there are several mandatory courses, but also various specialisations and elective courses to choose from. To be able to make a study programme suiting both your academic background and your study goals, you are advised to draft a study plan well in advance. Besides making the study plan, we advise you to explain your choices in a motivation letter.

Underneath you find the steps you need to take to start your study programme, and how we support you with this. Your study plan and motivation letter will also be discussed with your study adviser after admission and registration. For now, we hope you will explore the potential of our programme and draft a study plan that makes you even more enthusiastic about your choice. So, make yourself comfortable and let's get started.

### Process to compile your own study plan

See the process underneath for the different steps you need to take, to get to your own study plan. You are advised to draft your own plan first, and afterwards discuss this with your study adviser, before you register for your courses.



- **Prepare your study plan**

All our study programmes are different, so to get started with your draft study plan, you need programme specific information. Underneath we explain how to explore the options of the MSc programme Environmental Sciences. Your study plan does not have to be 100% complete and perfect. It is a preliminary plan. The intake meeting with your study adviser is the opportunity to discuss your ideas, options, choices and ask your questions.

- **Have an intake meeting with your study adviser**

Study advisers play an important role in assisting you when designing your individual programme. After you have been admitted and have registered, your draft study plan will be finetuned with one of our study advisers during an intake meeting. The study adviser will take your wishes (what you like to learn) into account, as well as your needs (what is needed to bridge a possible gap between your academic background and the study programme) and study goals (what you want to achieve).

*Tip: During the AID (Annual Introduction Days), you are strongly advised to join the Master Study Day. During this day, our study advisers will welcome you, you can meet your fellow students and ask all the questions you have about the programme. Any individual questions about your study plan can be addressed during your intake meeting.*

- **Register for courses**

Once you and your study adviser have made your tailor-made study plan definite, you can register for courses in Osiris and start your study programme.

## To get started with your study plan for the MSc Environmental Sciences

### General build-up of MSc Environmental Sciences

The infographics below show the general build-up of our MSc programme Environmental Sciences. The times at which the compulsory courses of the common part are taught are filled in. If a subject is taught more than once a year, you can choose the most suitable moment for you. You can use this as a format for your draft study plan (see Format for study plan MES.xlsx).

In year 1, you will be taking courses and in year 2 you will be writing your thesis (6 months) and do your internship (4 months). An academic year is divided in to six education periods. Period 1, 2, 5 and 6 last 8 weeks and contain a study load of 12 credits. Period 3 and 4 last 4 weeks and contain a study load of 6 credits.

		Compulsory, unless advised otherwise		Compulsory		Free choice	
<b>MSc Environmental Sciences</b>							
<b>FIRST YEAR (start in September)</b>							
		Period 1 Sep/Oct	Period 2 Nov/Dec	Period 3 Jan	Period 4 Feb	Period 5 Mar/Apr	Period 6 May/Jun
morning		YRM-20306 Research Methodology in Environmental Science	YRM-20306 Research Methodology in Environmental Science				Academic Master Cluster (AMC), in consultation with your study adviser
afternoon		ESA-20806 Principles of Environmental Sciences	ENP-35806 Environmental Quality and Governance			ENP-35806 Environmental Quality and Governance	
<b>FIRST YEAR (start in February)</b>							
		Period 4 Feb	Period 5 Mar/Apr	Period 6 May/Jun	Period 1 Sep/Oct	Period 2 Nov/Dec	Period 3 Jan
morning		ESA-20806 Principles of Environmental Sciences			Academic Master Cluster (AMC), in consultation with your study adviser	YRM-20306 Research Methodology in Environmental Science	
afternoon			ENP-35806 Environmental Quality and Governance			ENP-35806 Environmental Quality and Governance	
<b>SECOND YEAR</b>							
		Thesis (36 ects)				Internship (24 ects)	

This schedule is based on the study handbook. In case of any discrepancy, the study handbook is the guiding principle.

Additional obligatory courses in period 1 (start in September) or period 4 (start in February): ZSS-06000 General Safety and ZSS-06200 Fieldwork Safety. The safety courses are e-learning courses which take only a little time to do (you don't get credits for it). Therefore, they can easily be combined with the courses as mentioned in the schedule above.

### Draft your study plan step by step

Underneath, you will find the process on how to draft your study plan for the MSc Environmental Sciences. The MSc programme Environmental Sciences (MES) is a wide-ranging programme in which environmental and sustainability issues can be approached from the perspectives of natural, social and technological sciences. The MES programme is tailor-made and thesis-oriented. That's why your thesis is the starting point for your study plan.



1. Drafting your study plan starts with choosing your thesis track. We will give you information on how you could do this.
2. After you have chosen your thesis track, you can select the mandatory courses, restricted optional courses and elective courses.
3. To motivate your choices for the courses you included in your study plan, you will write a motivation letter. Both your motivation letter and study plan will be discussed during the intake meeting with your study adviser.

### Choose your favourite thesis track

When you are in the process of choosing a thesis track, you may ask yourself the following questions:

1. Why am I interested in this specific track? What do I want to learn?
2. Does this track relate to my background (education, work, other experiences, etc.)?

The MSc Environmental Sciences offers 10 thesis tracks divided over 4 specialisations. To explore the different thesis tracks, we advise you to undertake the actions below:

1. Read more about our [thesis tracks on our website](#), and try to select 1 or 2 tracks that you like best.
2. Go over the course descriptions of the thesis track(s) of your choice, to make sure most of the related courses appeal to you. You will find the courses per thesis track on the thesis track pages.
3. Visit the webpages of the chair groups related to the thesis track(s) to learn more about their research, to make sure this is the field you would like to conduct your thesis in. The link of the relevant chair group can be found in the description of the thesis track, under "+ more about this thesis track".

### Career preparation courses

In the MSc Environmental Sciences the internship and the course Academic Master's Cluster (AMC) focus on career preparation. Besides, there are [other additional possibilities related to career preparation](#):

- Environmental Education and Environmental communication
- International relations (only for Environmental Policy thesis track)
- Entrepreneurship and
- Research

If you are interested in one of these possibilities, check the content and how to fit it into your study programme. Discuss your ideas with your study adviser during the intake.

## Schedule your courses

When you have chosen your thesis track, you are going to schedule the courses. [On this page](#) you find links to the 10 thesis tracks. For each thesis track you find all courses that are compulsory, compulsory unless advised otherwise or restricted optional.

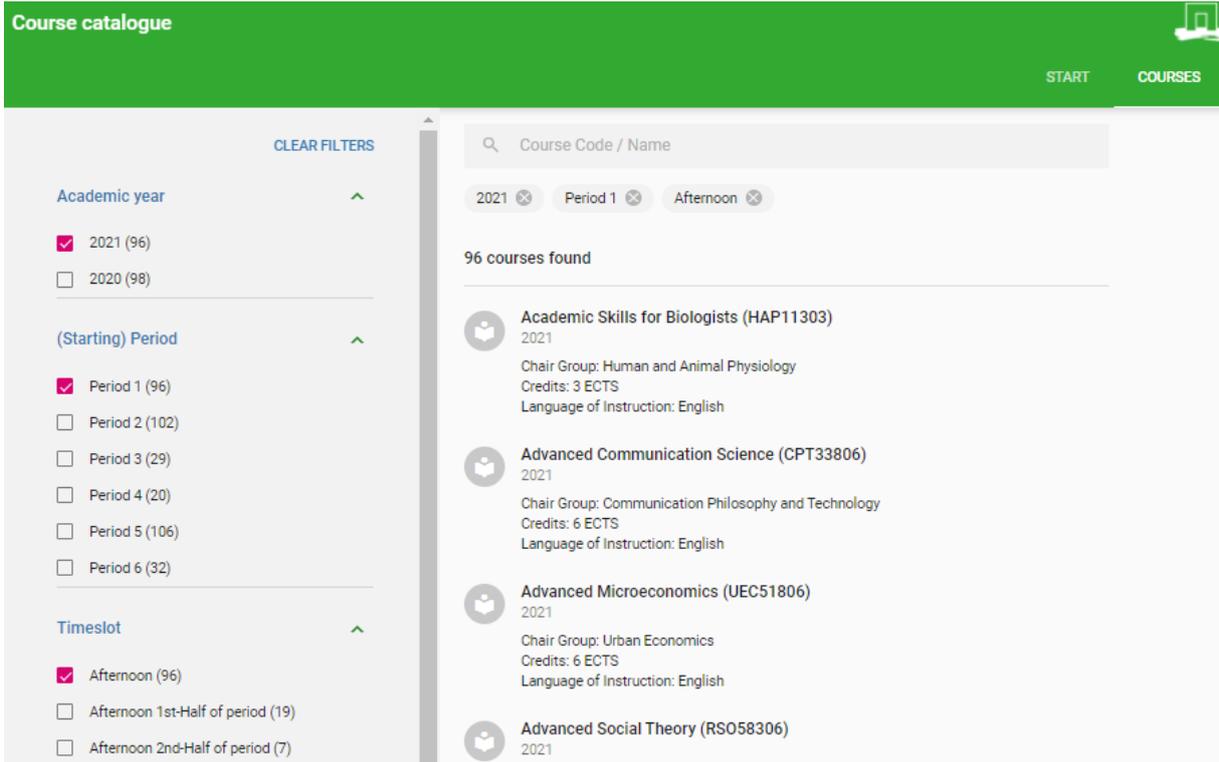
- Schedule the compulsory courses\*, including the safety courses
- Choose the restricted optional courses that you want and schedule them
- Complete your study programme with elective courses. Ask yourself: do I want to broaden my studies or go more in-depth? What knowledge and skills do I want to add to my basic programme? Do I have a theme or just separate courses? How do these courses contribute to my programme, development, career, ambition...
  - Electives can be courses from other thesis tracks, and also from other programmes. You can even include [courses from other universities](#) via EduXchange.
  - Go to the [Osiris Course Catalogue](#) and select the "course" tab
  - On the left side, select the period and timeslot
  - All courses for this particular selection are shown
  - Include them in your study schedule. Your master programme needs to include at least 24 ECTS on level '3' courses, see the text box 'Course codes explained'.

*Tip: Look for options first, and decide later.*

\* In the programme there are some specific courses that "you need to choose unless indicated otherwise by your study adviser". These courses are compulsory unless you can proof that you already master the learning outcomes of these courses as described in the [Osiris Course Catalogue](#). If it is clear for yourself that you don't master the learning outcomes of such a course, then you include these courses into your programme. If you can proof that you master the learning outcomes, you need to discuss this with your study adviser first and get approval for skipping this course.

- YRM20306 Research Methodology for Environmental Sciences  
If you have doubts, do this [diagnostic test](#).
- ESA20806 Principles of Environmental Sciences  
If you have doubts if you master the learning outcomes, check if your bachelor programme was a broad environmental programme with both social and natural sciences and integration courses. If yes, you need to discuss this with your study adviser. If not, you include the course in your programme.

In some thesis tracks you find a course scheduled in period 2 in the morning, which "you need to select if your study adviser deems it necessary". If you have a knowledge gap between your bachelor programme and this thesis track you should take this course. Always discuss this with your study adviser.



The screenshot shows the 'Course catalogue' interface. On the left, there are filter sections: 'Academic year' with '2021 (96)' selected; '(Starting) Period' with 'Period 1 (96)' selected; and 'Timeslot' with 'Afternoon (96)' selected. A search bar at the top right contains 'Course Code / Name' and has filters for '2021', 'Period 1', and 'Afternoon'. Below the search bar, it states '96 courses found' and lists four course entries with their details.

Picture: How to find elective courses in Osiris Course Catalogue

### Course codes explained

A course code has a standard format: **AAA-axxbb** (e.g. ESA-20806)

- **AAA** = abbreviation of responsible chair group, not per se the only group involved. In this example ESA = Environmental Systems Analysis
- **a**:
  - 1= introductory
  - 2= continuing
  - 3= in-depth
  - 5= capita selecta
  - 6= Academic Master Cluster
  - 7= internship
  - 8= thesis
  - 9= course by endowed chair
- **xx** = used to make codes unique (no specific meaning)
- **bb** = number of credits

Your master programme needs to include at least 24 ECTS on level '3' courses (a=3).

### Checklist for your study plan

Finished drawing up your study plan? Then we have a checklist for you to see if it contains everything that should be in it:

- Does your study plan consist of 120 ECTS (60 ECTS for courses in year 1 + 36 ECTS for thesis and 24 ECTS for internship in year 2)?
- Did you include the mandatory course ENP 35806, and the mandatory courses (unless covered already) ESA 20806 and YRM 20306?
- Did you include the mandatory Safety Courses?
- Did you include one of the Academic Master Cluster options (European Workshop, Academic Consultancy Training + MOS modules, ELS 31806 + ELS 32806, or the Research Master Cluster)?
- Did you include at least 12 ECTS of the restricted optional courses for your thesis track?
- Did you include at least 4 courses on level 3 (so 24 ECTS in total)?

### Write your motivation letter

After you have designed your draft plan, you write a short motivation for the choices you have made. Please download and use the format (Format Motivation letter.docx).

DON'T WORRY, your study plan does not have to be 100% complete and perfect. It is a preliminary plan. Perhaps you are doubting between 2 thesis tracks, then you might draw 2 plans and write 2 motivations. Maybe for a certain period you found several appealing courses and can't choose yet. Just put those options in your plan! And if you don't know how to fit in career preparation, mention it in your study plan, and motivate why you are interested. The intake meeting with your study adviser is the opportunity to discuss your ideas, options, choices and ask your questions.

### Next steps

After admission and registration for the MSc Environmental Sciences, you send your draft study plan and motivation letter to [office.bes-mes-mue-mcl@wur.nl](mailto:office.bes-mes-mue-mcl@wur.nl). Please use the following names for the documents: <MES\_last name, first name\_StudyPlan.xlsx> and <MES\_last name, first name\_MotivationLetter.docx>. You will be contacted to make an appointment for the intake meeting with your study adviser.

Good luck!

The Environmental Sciences team